

UMP-13-06
14-UNIT DETACHED LIVE/WORK UNITS
2075 Placentia Avenue

DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT

The 40,284-square foot (.92-acre) site is proposed to be developed with 14 detached townhouse style live/work units. The units are proposed with three stories of living space and a small roof deck on the fourth level. The site is located at the west side of Placentia Avenue (Attachment 2). The site has a General Plan land use designation of Light Industry and a zoning classification of MG (General Industrial) (Attachment 3).

Traffic Evaluation

The Transportation Division completed a preliminary trip generation analysis to compare the proposed 14-unit project to existing conditions and General Plan conditions (full build out). The preliminary projections (156 daily trips) indicate that the proposed development would generate more trips compared to the existing industrial land use designation and the potential build out under current zoning.

The average daily trips for the parcel assuming a 0.35 FAR for general industrial development on the 40,284-square foot site translates to 98 trips (average daily rate is 6.97 trips per thousand square feet). The overall average daily trips with the proposed project will increase compared to the maximum allowable build out for an industrial building pursuant to the current zoning and General Plan land use designation.

Preliminary Trip Generation Analysis

Land use	Density/Intensity	AM	PM	Daily
Proposed Live/Work	34,342 SQ.FT. 14 Units	2	18	156
Existing Zoning (MG)	14,099 0.35 FAR	13	14	98

Parking and Access

The urban plans require three parking spaces for each live/work unit up to 2,000 square feet in area. The proposed live/work units include a two-car garage for each unit. A total of 18 open parking spaces are provided, four spaces in excess of the requirements. However, the spaces are not dispersed throughout the site and only provided at the rear. The applicant has indicated that the site plan with the parking spaces grouped at the rear is designed to meet the fire access requirements, which is a maximum of 300 feet to the front door of each unit from the street curb. There is only one access to the site from Placentia Avenue.

DEVIATION FROM DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

The Mesa West Bluffs Urban Plan allows development flexibility in exchange for quality projects that meet the Urban Plan vision. In this case, the applicant is proposing 14 live/work units consistent with the vision of the urban plans. The final development plan requires approval by the Planning Commission.

The site layout is constrained by the requirements for adequate access by Fire Department. These requirements limit the placement of buildings to be within 300 feet of Placentia Avenue. The proposed floor plan is designed with ground floor work space adjacent to two-car garages.

Council feedback is needed with regard to the following:

- Deviation from minimum building to building setback: A minimum of ten feet separation is required between units; the proposed buildings are eight feet apart. This distance is not adequate to provide a parking space between units and all the parking spaces are provided at the rear of the site;
- Deviation from the work space requirement in a live/work unit: a minimum of 250 square feet exclusive of hallways/stairways and bathrooms is required; approximately 200 square feet is proposed. This area does not include the ground floor bath room; and
- Deviation from the number of required open parking spaces: live/work units require a minimum of 1.5 covered and 1.5 open parking spaces: A minimum of 42 parking spaces are required, 21 open and 21 covered spaces. A total of 46 parking spaces are provided but only 18 are open parking spaces.

In addition to the noted deviations, there is a concern that since the project site is very narrow and bounded by two industrial uses, adequate separation is not provided. As envisioned by the urban plans, a live/work development would be compatible with the light industrial surrounding uses with the use of adequate sound walls and construction assemblies to achieve the allowable interior noise standards. The project will need to incorporate sound walls, and exterior wall assemblies, that would reduce the interior noise levels. The roof decks face the interior of the site. The roof decks and balconies of mixed use and live/work projects are exempt from the exterior noise standards for private open space.

MERITS OF THE URBAN PLAN SCREENING REQUEST

Following is a summary of the merits of a proposed live/work project at this location:

1. Project meets objectives of the Mesa West Bluffs Urban Plan. The project promotes live/work units as a new type of urban housing in Costa Mesa. All units include a ground floor work space that can be attractive for home occupations. Live/work units may be attractive to small business owners with minimal customer traffic, artist and designers, etc.
2. Proposed development is consistent with the objectives of the Zoning Code and Urban Plan. The proposed live/work development is consistent with the goals and policies of the General Plan, Mesa West Bluffs Urban Plan. The proposed development generally meets the development standards for live/work units.

ISSUES TO BE HIGHLIGHTED

Although the proposed live/work project will be desirable at this location, the following potential deviations will be required with the proposal.

1. The trip generation from the project site will need to be further studied. With a preliminary analysis, the trip generation for the site would increase with the proposed change of use from a general light industrial use to live/work units. A complete traffic study will be required to assess the increased traffic and appropriate conditions of approval.
2. Reversion of live/work units to residential use. The site is long and narrow bounded by existing industrial uses. The site design does not promote the live/work concept envisioned by the urban plans. The parking is not dispersed for visitors and the units have side entries that limit the work space visibility. Although there is potential for some units to serve and function as conventional residences, this proposal would still qualify as a "mixed-use development" as defined by the Urban Plan.